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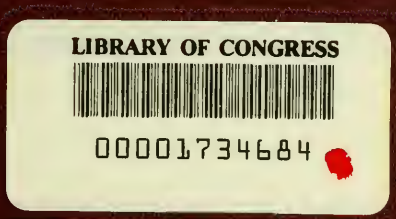

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CHRISTIAN DUTY.

THREE DISCOURSES

DELIVERED IN THE

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITARIAN CHURCH

OF PHILADELPHIA

MAY 28th, JUNE 4th AND JUNE 11th, 1854

BY

W. H. FURNESS

WITH REFERENCE TO THE RECENT EXECUTION OF THE FUGITIVE SLAVE LAW IN BOSTON AND NEW YORK.

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DISCOURSE.

JOHN XXI. 15.

"Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs."

A word upon the relation in which Peter stood at this time to Jesus. When Jesus was in the hands of the Priests, and suffering the most brutal treatment, Peter, who had followed the party that had arrested Jesus, and who, a little while before the arrest, had made the strongest protestations of fidelity to his master, alarmed at the violence that was beginning to be used, soon lost all courage, and became so terrified on his own account that, when he was suspected and accused of being a follower of Jesus, he denied that he had any knowledge of him, and this too with oaths and imprecations, calling God to witness the truth of his asseverations. Jesus heard the loud voice of his faithless friend disclaiming all acquaintance with him, but he said nothing. He only cast on Peter that look of mingled pity and reproach, which awoke in the bosom of the apostate disciple the agony of remorse, and caused him to go away from the place and weep bitterly; that look, of which an

eloquent English preacher has said that, "if it taught Peter to repent, it should teach us to believe," so expressive was it of the divine humanity of Jesus; such a look as weeping angels cast upon weak and sinning men. In a few hours afterwards Jesus expired upon the cross, and the poor, broken-hearted Peter had it to remember that his last act towards his crucified friend was an act of the basest cowardice and treachery. But on the third day after the bloody tragedy, there came the startling rumor that Jesus was alive again, and had been seen by one and another of his friends, and had spoken with them. With what conflicting emotions, with what intense desire and with what shrinking and dread must the apostle have looked forward to meeting, eye to eye, the revered friend whom he had so shamefully disowned! Our text is a part of the passage which relates an interview of Peter with Jesus, after the resurrection of the latter.

My friends, this is an extraordinary, unprecedented fact, the re-appearance alive of the Crucified. But unprecedented as it is, and whatever may be the difficulties that cumber it, still I think no one who studies the account given of this interview of Jesus and Peter, can fail to be struck with the evidence, which it furnishes, of the identity of Jesus. That the person who re-appeared alive as Jesus was Jesus himself and no other, there can be no doubt. Every word is in wonderful keeping and character. Thrice had Peter, who before so abounded above all others in professions of devotion to his Master, thrice had he denied that he so much as knew him! Surely, judging by any ordinary standard of human nature, we should justify Jesus in casting off his

false friend forever, or, at least, in pronouncing upon him the severest condemnation. But Jesus was far above anything of this sort. In that generous and Godlike heart there was no thought of personal injury awakened, stinging him so much as to a look of anger. He knew his unhappy friend thoroughly. He knew his weakness, and no sense of personal insult blinded him to his love. In words of the tenderest consideration he seeks to put him on his guard. He makes no allusion to the past, except that as many times as Peter had denied him, so many times he repeats the question, with most impressive emphasis: "Lovest thou me?" calling Peter by his whole name, "Simon, son of Jonas," thus concentrating the whole force of the question upon him and him alone, as if he had said, "Simon, I put it to you, you alone and no other, Do you love me?"

And then, how characteristic, how like Jesus it is that he did not demand, as an atonement for the past, any special personal homage from Peter. You know what a striking trait it was in Christ that he exacted no honor for himself, personally. On more than one occasion he expressly disclaimed it. To the young man, who came kneeling down to him and addressing him with the title of "Good Master," he said, "Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one—God." Again, when a woman once, in a crowd that gathered round him, expressed her admiration of him by pronouncing a blessing on her who had borne such a son, he declined the tribute, exclaiming, "Blessed rather are they who hear the word of God and keep it." Once, and again he declared that it was not by magnifying him personally—it was not by crying Lord, Lord, that men would

be accepted, but by doing the will of our heavenly Father. Indeed, he would fain have sunk himself out of sight. "Of myself," he said, "I am nothing." "He that believeth in me believeth not in me, but in him who sent me." And this spirit prompting him to disclaim all personal honors,—I have no words to describe the power with which it breathes through that grand and awful account which he gives, of the time when the Son of Man will come in his glory, with all the holy angels with him, and will take his seat upon the throne of his glory, and all nations will be gathered before him. Then he represents himself as demanding no homage for himself personally, but as identifying himself with the poorest, the most despised of mankind, and as rewarding or punishing men as they have done good or neglected to do it to the least of his brethren.

In the very same spirit, in our text, he bids Peter atone for his denial and prove his love—how? by paying him divine honors? No, his command is, "Feed my lambs." "Feed my sheep." This is all. The Good Shepherd, transfers the debt of homage due to him to his lambs. He came, himself with lamb-like gentleness, seeking not his own, not honor for himself, prepared rather to meet dishonor and death—he came to seek and save the family of man, the flock of God who were wandering far away from the fold, lost in horrid wildernesses, exposed to fall into fearful snares and pitfalls, and to be rent and torn by wild beasts. Men seemed to him, as he said, like sheep that had no shepherd. We all know who it was that especially had his heart, and, in whose service, he encountered the wrath of the honorable and the great, and sacrificed his life. It was

the poor, the ignorant and the vicious, the neglected and despised, who had none to plead for them, who were trodden down from the cradle to the grave. These were his sheep, his lambs. And in commanding Peter to feed them, it is as if he had said: "You say that you love me; doubtless you believe what you say. But only in one way can you make it certain to me and to yourself that your profession of love is not false and deceitful; and that way is, by taking care of those who wander in the world like lambs among wolves. Feed them, although, in procuring sustenance for them, you will be required like me to sacrifice yourself."

And now, brothers, sisters, children, give me your hearts, listen with a good will to what I say. As Heaven is my witness I would not utter one word save for the dear love of Christ and of God, and the salvation of your own souls. Does it require any violent effort of the mind to suppose Christ to address to each one of us personally the same question that he put to Peter: "Lovest thou me?" To such a question what could we say in reply but "O, thou holy and generous One, who didst suffer every indignity, and pour out thine innocent blood upon the cruel cross for Truth's sake and for man, we have basely denied thee many times. Yet thou knowest that we would love thee." To such a protestation on our part, can any one for a single moment imagine that he would answer, saying: "As you love me, acknowledge me as one with the Supreme God of the Universe, equal to him in power and glory, or as a super-angelic being, clothed with divine offices, and claiming divine honors, or as a mysterious Atonement for the sins of

the world ?" Oh no, no. He would say to us as he said to Peter: Feed my lambs. Feed my sheep.

At the hearing of this brief command, so simple, so direct, so unqualified, are we prompted like the teacher of the law, who, when Christ bade him love his neighbor as himself, asked, "And who is my neighbor," and in the parable of the Good Samaritan, received for answer that the Samaritan whom he despised, just as we despise the African, was his neighbor,—are we prompted in like manner to ask: 'And who are the lambs, who are the sheep of Christ?' Who are his lambs! Who his sheep! Behold that great multitude, more than three millions of men and feeble women and children, wandering on our soil,—no, not wandering, but chained down, not allowed to stir a step at their own free will, crushed and hunted, with all the power of one of the mightiest nations that the world has yet seen, wielded to keep them down in the depths of the deepest degradation into which human beings can be plunged. These, these, that we despise are our neighbors, the poor, stricken lambs of Christ.

To cast one thought towards them may well cause us to bow down our heads in the very dust with shame. No wonder that, professing to love Christ and his religion, we do not like to hear them spoken of. For, so far from feeding the sheep of Christ, we are exerting the whole associated power of this land to keep them from being fed. 'Feed my lambs.' We might feed them with fraternal sympathy, with hope, with freedom, the imperishable bread of Heaven. We might lead them into green pastures and by still waters, into the glorious liberty wherewith Christ died to make all

men free, the liberty of the children of God. We might secure to them the exercise of every sacred affection and faculty wherewith the Creator has endowed them. But we do none of those things. We suffer this great flock of the Lord Jesus to be treated as chattels, bought and sold, like beasts of burthen, hunted and lacerated by dogs and wolves. I say we, we of these Free Northern communities, because it is by our allowance, signified as effectually by our silence as by our active co-operation, that such things are. They could continue so scarcely an hour, were not the whole moral, religious and physical power of the North pledged to their support. Are we not in closest league and union with those who claim and use the right to buy and sell human beings, God's poor, the lambs of Christ, a Union which we imagine brings us in so much silver and gold as compensates for the sacrifice of our humanity and manhood? Nay, are we not under a law to do the base work of blood-hounds, hunting the panting fugitive of Freedom? I utter no word of denunciation. There is no need. For facts that have occurred only within the last week transcend all denunciation. Only a few hours ago there was a man with his two sons hurried back into the inhuman bondage from which they had just escaped, and that man the brother, and those two sons, the nephews of a colored clergyman of New York, of such eminence in the New School Presbyterian Church that he has received the honors of a European University, and has acted as moderator in one of the Presbyteries of the same church when held in the city where he resides. Almost at the very moment the poor fugitive with his children was dragged through our city, the General

Assembly of that very branch of the Presbyterian Church, now in session here, after discussing for days the validity of Roman Catholic baptism, threw out as inexpedient to be discussed the subject of that great Wrong which was flinging back into the agony of slavery a brother of one of their own ordained ministers, and could not so much as breathe a word of condemnation against the false and cruel deed which has just been consummated at the Capitol of the nation.

When such facts are transpiring in our midst, we cannot be guiltless concerning the lambs of Christ. It is we, we who make up the public opinion of the North, we who consent that these Free States shall be the hunting ground where these our poor brothers and sisters are the game; it is we that withhold from them the bread of life, the inalienable rights of man. As we withhold these blessings, so is it in our power to bestow them. The sheep then that Christ commands us, as we love him, to feed, are those who are famishing for the lack of the food which it is in our power to supply. And we can help to feed and relieve and liberate them by giving our hearty sympathy to the blessed cause of their Emancipation, to the Abolition of the crying Injustice with which they are treated, by uttering our earnest protest against the increasing and flagrant outrages of the oppressor, by withholding all aid and countenance from the work of oppression.

We have no need to lift a finger in the way of violence, or to stain the cause of the slave, which is the cause of Christ himself, with a single drop of human blood. There is a passive resistance which is invincible. When every

member of a community is animated by such a fervent love of justice and freedom that he is prepared to suffer and die for them, but never to inflict suffering or death, in such a community inhuman laws will find none to execute them, and the officials of Government would sooner throw up their offices than carry out such enactments. No man there would dare to brave a united and determined public opinion. To such a public opinion every man and every woman may contribute, using no force but the force of persuasion and truth, abjuring all weapons save such as appeal to reason and conscience, knowing no timidity, no lukewarmness, no fear, standing faithfully up in the face of every danger for humanity, for justice, for liberty for all. Thus serving the cause of the weak and the oppressed, we may obey the command of Christ, "Feed my sheep."

While I thus counsel you, as you profess to love the Lord Jesus, thus to do his bidding by a determined but pacific opposition to the cruelty and wrong which are inflicted on those for whom he died, there come to us tidings of violence and bloodshed in a northern city, in an uproar of excitement, as it well may be, at the violation of its soil. I grieve to think that a drop of blood has been shed, but if blood must flow, I would rather a thousand times that it should be the blood of the friends of the slave than of his oppressors. But while it is sorrowful that any blood should be shed, it is no wonder that a law which would disgrace the most despotic government that ever existed, a law, which, in trampling on the weak, strikes a blow at all human rights, should meet with bloody resistance on that spot where the flame of American Liberty first burst forth, under the

shadow of that hill which was drenched with the blood of the hardy fathers of New England. It is no wonder that that flame should again break out when the Slave power again attempts to defile that sacred soil by dragging away from it the fugitive for Freedom. No wonder that the capital of Massachusetts (God save the dear old Commonwealth and make her the defender of liberty on this soil, for if she fails, I know not where else on earth we shall look,) should be in a blaze of excitement at such a juncture, when the plighted faith of the South, kept for thirty years, has been so basely broken, and territory, expressly guarantied to Freedom, has been ruthlessly torn from her, as if Slavery had an equal right there or anywhere on the face of God's earth. The fruits of the Nebraska iniquity are ripening very fast. We are as yet witnessing only the beginning of the consequences which are to follow that outrage upon Liberty. I cannot pray that the excitement may subside while its cause remains; rather may it grow day by day, hour by hour; but I do pray that we may be spared the effusion of human blood. But if blood must be shed, let it not be shed by those who are struggling for the Right, rather may their own flow freely to the last drop!

But to return. "As you love me," saith Jesus, "feed my lambs." Such is obviously the test of our reverence for Christ: sympathy for the weak and the injured, for those especially with whom it is hazardous to sympathize, whose cause we espouse only to incur obloquy and loss. If we do not feel for them, feel deeply, so deeply as to be interested, actively interested in their behalf, eager, not only willing, but eager to aid them, to swell the tide of sympathy with

them, if not ourselves to plead their cause, yet interested always in hearing their cause pleaded by others—if, I say, we do not feel thus acutely for them, our love of Christ, our Christian profession is a mere pretence. It can have no acceptance before God, no respect among men. Many there are who do not feel for the lambs of Christ, who are perfectly indifferent to their wrongs, who care not though they be ravaged and slaughtered all the day long, and who are free to acknowledge that they do not and cannot feel for them. What! can you not feel for your own flesh, for beings made in all points as you are, with like sensibilities to pleasure and pain, with like affections, like sorrows and joys, like ties, social and domestic? Then do not pretend to feel with and for Christ himself. But, friends, your hearts are not so hard and cold, you are not so devoid of the common instincts and sympathies of human nature as you would make it appear. You are not stocks and stones. You cannot look on the agonies of a dumb animal without pain. And if you are unmoved by the thought of suffering men, women, and children, it is because that thought has not yet been brought vividly before you, it is because you have not seen these suffering lambs of Christ. Had you seen them, had you seen, as some of us have seen not long ago, a poor mother fleeing from the bondage in which one after another of her numerous children had been sold and carried far away into hopeless slavery, I am sure you would have vowed in your inmost souls never again to forget the commands of your Lord and Saviour, never again to be heedless of his poor lambs.

But at all events, unless we feel for those whom he felt

for, we cannot really love him. Nothing is clearer to my mind than that it is only through sympathy with them that we can have any appreciation of him. That in him which commands our faith, our reverence, our affection is his humanity, that interest in men which was so strong in him that he sacrificed everything for it. This, his humane and generous spirit, this it is that renders him so beautiful, so loveable, so great. It is for this that we revere and love him when we love him truly. His self-renouncing love inspires our love. Let it be that his nature was divine, super-angelic, something different and above our common human nature, nevertheless, it is not for anything peculiar in his nature that he is reverenced. His generous spirit is what we love him for.

But we cannot love that spirit, we can have no idea of it, any more than a man born blind can have of colors, unless we are first conscious of some measure of it in ourselves. Only through a kindred spirit in ourselves can we enter into the spirit of Christ, and know of a certainty how beautiful it is, and how divine. The more fully we become imbued with the same spirit, the more thoroughly do we know him. He bids us, therefore, feed his lambs, that, by so doing, we may learn to love him. Only by obeying his commands can we bring him close to us and have him dwell in us, the object of our reverent and devoted affection. True enough it is that if we love him we shall do as he did. But the reverse of this proposition is also true. If we do like him, who, like a true shepherd, gave his life for the sheep, we shall discern a greatness and beauty in his character, to be discerned in no other way. We are prone to

place great reliance on grand descriptions of him. We magnify him with all sorts of consecrated phrases, but they amount to nothing. They do not bring us nearer to him or him nearer to us. Only his spirit in us can interpret his life for us and reveal to us its transcendant beauty. And his spirit,—all the relations of life, the circle of home and kindred, our social ties, all furnish us with opportunities for the cultivation of that.

Above all, the lambs of Jesus, his harassed and hunted flock, driven down into dark depths by the wolves of Oppression, these all, appealing to us for our pity, for our help, invite us to become partakers of his spirit, and so enter into a knowledge and love of Him in whom are hid treasures of wisdom, sanctification, and redemption. O how are we adjured, at this present momentous crisis, when cruel Wrong has taken another gigantic stride, when the virgin territory of the great West has been thrown open to the pollution of Slavery, when the prospect is black with disastrous portents to the cause of Humanity, when we are threatened with war for the sake of the accursed traffic in human flesh,—how are we adjured, not merely for the sake of our country, already become the abode of a most ruthless despotism, not merely for the sake of unborn generations, but for the love of Him whom we so clamorously profess to honor and love—how solemnly are we entreated to look our condition in the face, to pause before it is too late, to withdraw ourselves from this monstrous conspiracy against the poor outcasts of Africa, in a word, to obey the command of Christ, and feed his lambs. He has declared our duty to them paramount to all other considerations. And in beseeching you

to turn your hearts to their great wretchedness, remember, I express no mere personal feeling. It is not I, it is Truth, it is Christ who died for us, it is God the great Father of us all, who, through the instincts of our common humanity, calls upon us to cherish and protect and feed the poor, to do unto the least as we would do unto the greatest, to pray and labor for the most abject slave as if we beheld in him the Son of God himself.

DISCOURSE.

LUKE XIV. 33.

"WHOSOEVER HE BE OF YOU THAT FORSAKETH NOT ALL THAT HE HATH, HE CANNOT BE MY DISCIPLE."

If there is any one thing more prominent than another in the life and teachings of Him whose sacred and immortal memory we profess to honor, it is the sympathy he felt for suffering men, the poor and the ignorant, whom the rich and the powerful left heavy laden and uncared for. To these, to teach, to comfort and to bless them, he gave his life. He made their case his own. He put himself in their place. He condemned in the strongest language those who oppressed and neglected them. His rule was—the rule which he laid down in so many words, and of which his life to the very last breath was an illustration—that we should do to others as we would they should do to us. Our neighbor, whom, as he taught, we are to serve as we serve ourselves, is the suffering man whose sufferings we may relieve, whose wrongs we may right, whose rights we may vindicate, even though he be one of a people whom we have been brought up to despise as the Jews despised the Samaritans.

But why need I go on in this strain? It is written on every page of the New Testament that Christ taught first

of all, that he inculcated again and again, and in the most explicit language possible, as the most religious, most sacred of duties, the duty of sympathy with our suffering fellow man. I know nothing about Christianity, the religion which brings us statedly together in this place, I know not my right hand from my left, I do not know light from darkness, if it is not as plain as noonday, that what Christ requires of his friends is humanity, a humanity which is ready to meet any peril, to the loss of life itself, in the discharge of the simple offices to which it prompts. I look in vain for any word of his that limits or qualifies the obligation of this first Christian duty by any worldly or political considerations whatever. I cannot find that he has anywhere taught that the fear of giving offence or of creating political disturbance is to deter his disciples from helping others as they would wish, under a change of circumstances, to be helped themselves; or from asserting that blessed truth, namely, that there is one God, the Father of all, and that all men are brethren; that truth, which is to make all men happy and free. On the contrary, the very first time, as his history informs us, that he spoke in the Synagogue, or Jewish church, on the Sabbath day in the town where he was brought up, his hearers were so enraged at his saying, and quoting Scripture to show, that Gentiles had sometimes been favored by God more than Jews,* (a saying as offensive to Jewish ears as it is now to Christian ears to declare in church that colored people have equal rights with white,) that the meeting was broken up in disorder, and he himself

* How shockingly profane must it have sounded to the Jews to hear the Scriptures quoted for such a purpose; the Scriptures, which on every page declare Israel to be the Chosen of God!

barely escaped with his life. Such was the beginning of his public course, and its end—how was that? As all the world knows, he was seized in the dead of night and dragged away before the Roman magistrate on the charge of being a dangerous meddler with politics, of having been round everywhere in Galilee stirring up the people, putting in danger the peace of the nation, disturbing the civil order of things, and all from political motives, with the design to make himself a king. And from first to last, did these things move him a single hair? Self-possessed and serene as the morning light, in that God-like freedom from all fear which employs no weapon but truth, and uses no shield but the breastplate of a just and humane purpose, he kept steadily on his way, regardless of the storm of wrath and misrepresentation which beat upon him; and when he could do no more, and no other way to express his love of man was left him, he poured out his blood upon the terrible cross, with words of love for his mother, of forgiveness for his executioners, and of trust in God. Oh friends, we profess to commemorate the death of Christ, but have we ever penetrated to the heart of that fact? Had we any portion of his spirit, of the divine humanity which animated him, we should behold there such a manifestation of the beauty and majesty of God, as no outward vision could afford; no, not even though the heavens were rent in twain from north to south, and the multitudinous host of heaven's angels were revealed to sight.

But although it is perfectly plain to us, here and now, that Christ had no political design, but a purely benevolent and religious one, it was not so plain in his day, and to

those whose subsistence and wealth depended upon the maintenance of that order of things then existing, which it was the effect and tendency of his truth to disturb. They were for keeping everything just as it was. Their interests were vested in the established institutions of the times. It would not do, it endangered their comfort and ease, to have even so much as the decorum of the Sabbath day broken in upon by the instantaneous cure of a poor sick woman. It caused a great commotion, the gathering of a great crowd, and the timid and the selfish were alarmed, and did not know what was going to happen next. And besides, they who had kept the people down, imposing heavy burthens on them, burthens of superstition and ceremonial observance, were they not startled, think you, when they saw how the people were excited at the presence of Jesus, when they heard what he said about them ? He paid them no deference. He never had asked leave of them to do as he was doing. They could not understand him. They judged him by themselves. Strangers to the spirit that moved him, they were satisfied that he was prompted by selfish and ambitious motives. They saw in him not a particle of religion or humanity. They had no eyes to see it with. And when occasionally they were brought face to face with him and the power and goodness of his acts could not be questioned, and it was plain he was no impostor, then they said he was crazy, that he had a devil, that Beelzebub, the very prince of all the devils, befriended him.

He foresaw, he could not but foresee all this opposition and obloquy. He accepted it all as a part of his lot, as the burthen he must bear, that his good should be evil spoken of and his light denounced as darkness. He fore-

warned his friends that they must expect like treatment, and be excommunicated in like manner. And, accordingly, after his disappearance, they were arrested as disorderly persons and carried before the authorities, and forbidden so much as to breathe his name in public; and they answered, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye; for we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." They were denounced as men who were for turning the world upside down.

And those who came after the apostles, the Christians of the primitive ages, were exposed to the like charges. The Roman government was in matters of religion remarkably tolerant. They recognised the gods of all nations. When they conquered any strange people they received and adopted the idols that the conquered tribe worshipped, and set up their images in Rome. But then, occasionally, they had a custom of setting up an image of one of their own gods, or of the reigning Emperor, and requiring, as an act of allegiance to the State, that every subject of the empire, whatever might be his religion, should render it divine honors. They virtually said to the people, "You may have your own religion and worship your own gods as much as you please, but you must respect ours also. You must do reverence to this image of Augustus or Tiberius, of Nero or Trajan, or of whomsoever the Emperor might be. It is the decree of the Senate. It is a law of the government. And the laws must be obeyed until they are repealed. Your scruples of humanity, or religion, or conscience, or whatever you call them, cannot be considered. It would be treason to the State, rebellion against the government. So take the

censer and worship this idol." Many timid and well meaning Christians, I have no doubt, yielded and outwardly conformed for fear of the penalty, contrary to their own convictions. But many, very many, women as well as men, bravely refused and suffered martyrdom, and have been canonised in the hearts of millions of men, and have filled the world with beautiful and touching legends. Their refusal to obey the commands of the Government was accounted so insolent, such an interference with the political arrangements of the State, as deserved the severest punishment.

And so it has always been from those early days to the present. There is no human government that has ever existed that has not interfered with the discharge of Christian duty. How it stands with us here and now in this enlightened age, in this country which makes so loud a boast of its religious liberties, the events of the past week do most painfully admonish us. Were the laws to interfere with our religious forms, with the privileges of public worship which we are here enjoying; were a file of soldiers to enter our churches with fixed bayonets and command us to disperse, because we were not worshipping according to law, who would think of charging us with interfering with politics, going out of the sphere of religion, when we protested against and resisted such an outrage, as every man of us would? But when the hand of unlawful power, under the form of law, is laid upon our very hearts, suppressing the instincts of our common humanity, and we are forbidden to do what Christ has commanded, what child among us can fail to see where the charge of intermeddling and interference lies? Who does not see how false to Humanity and to Christ the churches of

Christ throughout New England must be this day, if they do not cry aloud in remonstrance and condemnation of the wrong which in defiance of the plainest teachings of Christ has been perpetrated upon our poor brother on the soil with which the dust of our Puritan fathers has mingled.

But, my friends, I have no heart now to dwell on the painful and humbling scenes of the past week, although they will not away. It is the old trial come up again, the trial which has been laid upon the disciples of Christ again and again, from his day to the present, and which they may shrink from but cannot escape. It is the old conflict between the spirit of Christ, which is a spirit of unwearied, all-embracing, self-sacrificing Humanity, and the spirit of the world embodied in the world's laws, practices, and institutions, and which is a spirit of selfish and inhuman power, aiming only to perpetuate itself at the sacrifice of the weak and the despised. In the providence of God we are involved in this conflict, and our first concern is, is it not? to be true to our profession as followers of Jesus, true to the faith, the reverence and the love with which we regard him?

For our own guidance now, let us give earnest heed to these words of his: "Whoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple;" and again: "Whoever doth not bear his cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple." You desire, in every trial to which you are subjected, to bear yourself as his disciple, to do as he has commanded. If you are brought into collision with human laws which are in direct opposition to his precepts, if, right before your eyes, a poor brother or sister is oppressed and wronged, you would discharge the office of a

Christian disciple, you would act as becomes a friend of Jesus. This is all that you have to do. Do this, and you will do all that you should, and if the oppressed one is not liberated and the wrong righted, the fault rests not on you. But you cannot do this; you cannot act the part of a Christian disciple merely because you wish to do so. There is a certain disposition of mind that is of indispensable importance, and without which all your efforts and prayers, though you agonize day and night, are of no avail. And that temper of mind, that disposition, is indicated in our text: "*Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath.*" You must hold all that you have and enjoy of the good things of this life, ease, the good-will and affection of friends and life itself—you must hold them all, prepared to renounce them all instantly and without reservation, for the sake of obedience to the dictates of humanity, the command of Christ.

Some will have it that, in order to do our Christian duty to an injured brother, we must be prepared to inflict suffering and wounds, to shoot, and stab, and shed fraternal blood, and, being so prepared, to attack and destroy his injurers. But Jesus never did so. He never taught so. He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before his shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth, or when he spake, he spake not to revile and exasperate, but only to utter fearlessly the soul-subduing words of Truth and Mercy. He nowhere commands, he forbids, his disciples to fight; and when, on one occasion, one of them drew a sword in his defence, his words were, "put up the sword in its sheath, for all they that use the sword will perish by the sword." Force stirs up force in

return. Shed the blood of the injurious, and then sympathy is transferred to them, and the cause of the injured is weakened, and you have lost power. If violence is used in behalf of the oppressed, it has no authority from the example and precepts of Christ. He overcame by giving up to his enemies all that they could take, all that it was in their power to overcome. They could not reach his soul, they could only lacerate and destroy his body. The spirit within him, as his blood flowed and his flesh was torn, grew more radiant in truth, more beautiful in love, more mighty in power. So bright, so beautiful, so mighty, that the grim and bloody cross partook of its beauty and power, and now shines over the whole earth like an unfading star, and nations prostrate themselves before it as their most sacred symbol. But, be it well considered, the submission which he taught and exemplified is not a tame acquiescence, it is not silence, it is not inaction. It implies and it manifests the utmost fearlessness. It is the highest form of courage. It is the very soul of power. It is the temper that speaks the truth boldly, defying the utmost violence of falsehood and wrong. It is the brave spirit that goes unharmed amid raging hate and malice, and gleaming swords and bristling bayonets, strong and calm in the conciousness of a true and benevolent purpose, and keeps back not one syllable of truth, though it should be the last that it utters. It knows no extravagance, no threatening, no boasting. It knows both how to speak and it knows how to be silent. It does not undertake to tell what it will do or will not do, but when the moment comes it does what the moment needs.

I am not saying that such a temper must be instantane-

ously irresistible. It may not gain the victory on the spot, but it gains a more glorious and enduring victory in the end, while the immediate triumph of its opposers is the pledge and seal of their final defeat; their victory is their defeat.

So it was in the case of Christ himself. I state only an historical fact. When his enemies had hung him on the cross, they flattered themselves they had put a full end to his religion, but from his cross there came forth a power which outlives the empire of Rome.

And it stands written in the pages of the human heart that it should be so. Nothing so fascinates mankind as Courage. And which is the greater courage, that which inspires a man cased in steel and armed to the teeth, or that which prompts him to go unarmed into the midst of mortal danger? The brute courage of the soldier is seen and admired at a glance, but Christian courage cannot be so readily seen and appreciated. The false standard of valor by which the world has so long been governed, has unfitted us to discern the glory of the Christian warrior. I am fully persuaded that whatever of true courage was manifested amid the trying scenes of last week has not been without its effect. The few brave, unarmed men who spoke and labored for humanity and justice, have, in their Christian bearing, laid the foundations of a personal influence which will hereafter tell with commanding effect in that exasperated community. Hitherto, they have been the objects of unmitigated ridicule and abuse, but already unequivocal signs have appeared that they are destined to reign with a power in the hearts their fellow citizens, which

our political leaders, though clad all over in official dignity, may envy, but never reach.

While we have thus had some instructive hint of the power of true courage, the courage that confronts violence but refrains from using it, we have had an illustration of the effect of violence which must not be lost on us. If the blood that was shed had been shed on the other side, had it been the blood of an unarmed friend of the fugitive, the fugitive would have been rescued, but it would have been at a terrible cost of human life; for the sight of such innocent blood would have roused into uncontrollable madness that demoniac element, before which the power of the will vanishes, and which slumbers in us all, in the feeblest woman. But as it was, that one life, much as it is on all accounts to be deplored, has saved we know not how many lives. It prevented also the rescue of the victim of despotic power. It checked the rising tide of popular feeling. It cooled the general heat. But remember, my hearers, there is a higher and more precious end than the rescue of one or of a thousand fugitives, and that is, the growth and increase of the humanity and valor of the Christian disciple, the revival of the spirit of Christ in the world, at once peaceful and fearless, lifting up and protecting the least of our brethren, and yet braving principalities and powers, ministering to the hunted fugitive slave, and rebuking wickedness in high places, undaunted by the formalities of human authority; the spirit that is ready to relinquish all things, that carries its cross as if doomed to death, prepared to die rather than prove false to humanity and God. This is what the world needs, for this only can bring true

freedom and peace. I would not have a single slave liberated, a single fugitive rescued, save through the agency of this Christian temper. Let us labor and pray for this. What though violent and semi-barbarous men brandish their weapons and pollute God's pure air with their profane revilings and threats, why should such things exasperate us, or tempt us to become like them? Why should we feel as if it were possible for them to insult us? Rather let us be true to the Gospel of justice and love, and, for the sake of that, bare our breasts to the arm of violence. So and so only, can the final victory be ours and ours forever. So may we disarm the violent not only of their weapons, but of their violence, and our triumph shall be even theirs also. Our individual work in the world is not to liberate nations, but, as we have opportunity, to grow in the grace of the Lord Jesus, to become more and more like him, to be faithful and true, all human laws and examples to the contrary notwithstanding. We would be friends with Christ. This we cannot be unless we are ready to renounce all that we have, all that men can take from us. Having this mind we shall have strength to do and endure all that may be required of us for the deliverance of a suffering world. Cherishing this mind, we shall gain all things, though we lose all things. We must keep our own souls in this self-sacrificing spirit at every hazard, for this is more to us than all governments, unions, and constitutions. He that saveth his life shall lose it, and he that loses it for the sake of Justice and Humanity, shall save it unto life eternal. I suppose these truths seem to you now extravagant and overstrained, but occasions may come, and very soon, at a

moment when we think not, as the signs of the times admonish us, when they will be found to have a world of meaning which no words can express.

In the meanwhile, what comfort, what support, what inspiration is at hand in the noble and godlike idea of Jesus! We may rise in thought to the contemplation of him, and associate ourselves with him as his friends, weak, failing often, but still hungering and thirsting to be his faithful friends, united to him by a kindred spirit; and not his friends alone, but the friends of the good and great, the patriots and saints, who have languished in dungeons and perished on scaffolds, or by the hands of frantic and misguided mobs, the sacramental host of God's elect, the noble company of the apostles and martyrs, who, having gone through much tribulation, weeping, bleeding, dying, ridiculed, tormented, cast out, do now reign in the deathless kingdom of the human heart, wearing crowns of unfading glory, and bearing palms of peace and of victory, friends of these, friends of God, the Universal Father, partaking of his nature, entering into his everlasting and unutterable joy.

DISCOURSE.

JOHN XIII. 17.

"If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."

It would seem, at first sight, as if it were only necessary that men should know the things they are bound to do, in order to do them. Accordingly, there is hardly anything about which the world is more busy, and for which so many costly institutions exist, and so many associations are in active operation, as the communicating of knowledge, the knowledge of truth and duty. The great prevailing idea seems to be, only let men know what is right to be done and they will do it. And we persist in this belief, and in all the varied activity to which it prompts, blind to the fact that there is all the difference in the world between knowing the right and doing it. The vast mechanism for the production of knowledge goes grinding on without weariness or intermission; church bells ring, thousands of voices speak, the Press works day and night, and printed paper is showered over the globe in quantities sufficient to cover its surface feet deep, and knowledge is produced in unmeasured abundance, but the virtue, the doing, which, it is so confidently believed, is to follow the knowing as the immediate and inseparable conse-

quence, is by no means forthcoming. Men continue pretty much as barbarian and selfish, the slaves of depraving appetites, as if they were wholly ignorant of the things relating to virtue and to duty. Still they plunge into vices that destroy both body and soul. They corrupt, they defraud, they hunt, they buy and sell one another. They wrangle and fight and kill, and give themselves unbounded license, until, under some obvious aspects, it would seem to be a world of devils that we are living in. And all this is going on under the blazing sun of Christian knowledge, whose noonday light discloses all the guilt and misery of these vicious courses, all the ruin of intemperance, all the shame of licentiousness, all the suffering that comes from hatred, oppression and violence, all the peace and power of a pure heart and a self-restraining will, all the honor and happiness of being humane and just. All these things, good and evil, are known. Men know well enough what is right, what is true. They know that they are bound by every consideration for life and health to restrain themselves. They know that they are bound by the very constitution of their nature to do unto others as they would that others should do unto them. They know all these things, but happy, happy would they be if they would only do them. Doing,—what a very different thing is it from knowing !

Now, the question arises, and it is a question which it is worth our while to consider with all the attention we can command : Why is it a different thing ? What makes this difference between knowing and doing ? Why is it that there is such a great gap between our knowledge and our practice ?

The simple truth is, that, while man has a faculty of discerning, of knowing, in other words, while he is a rational, intelligent being, this is not, by any means, all that he is. He is something else, and quite distinct. He is a creature of intelligence, it is true, and he is also a creature of instincts, impulses, passions, a creature of sympathy, of imitation, of habit. He is made up of appetites and desires which stimulate him to action antecedently to the development and exercise of his knowing and reasoning powers; desires, which seek nothing on earth but their own gratification, without regard to the conclusions of his reason and natural sense of right and wrong; desires, which are inflamed by indulgence and made well nigh irresistible by habit, and which are continually driving him onward in the face of reason and conscience, and which, oftentimes, even a most bitter experience has no power to check. No man knows better—no man knows as well as the slave of intemperance what a full fountain of suffering and anguish intemperance is. He who yields himself to the lust of sensual pleasure, sees the loathsome death's head under her false and gaudy adornments; but what avails the sight to keep him from that embrace which strikes death into his soul?

And they who ill-treat and tread down their brethren and sisters, trampling upon the sacred image of the invisible God stamped upon every human being, and they who hunt the poor bleeding lambs of the great Shepherd, or stand by and permit them to be hunted down and kept in most pitiable bondage, with no determined remonstrance on their part, they know perfectly well how unchristian, how inhuman all this is in the great eye of God.

L. of C.

We confess that we know it—confess, do I say? We earnestly avow—we actually make a boast of our knowledge. We say that no man need tell us anything about it, that we see the iniquity of oppressing human beings and treating them as brutes as plainly as it can be seen, that we feel it all as deeply as any one can feel it, that it is idle to talk to us, as if we were not as earnestly opposed to Slavery as any one can be. Again and again I have had it said to me, with apparently the most perfect simplicity, "Why do you keep saying so much about the slaves? Do you imagine that there is one among your hearers who does not agree with you? We all know that Slavery is very wrong. What is the use of harping upon this subject Sunday after Sunday? We all feel about it just as you do." "Feel about it just as I do." Very likely, my friends. It is very possible that you all feel as much, and that many of you feel about it more than I do. God knows that my regret always has been not that I feel so much, but that I do not feel more. Would to heaven that neither you nor I could eat or sleep for pity, pity for our poor down-trodden brothers and sisters. But the thing to which I implore your attention now is, not what we know and feel, but the delusion which we are under in confounding knowing with doing, in fancying that we are working to abolish Slavery because we know that it is wrong. This is what I would have you now to consider, the deception that we practise on ourselves, the dangerous error into which we fall, when we pass off the knowledge of our duty for the performance of it. These are two very distinct things. If you know what is right, happy are ye if ye do it.

Observe, my friends, what it is to which I am now entreating your consideration. It is not the wrongs or the rights of the oppressed upon which I am now discoursing. It is our own personal exposure to a most serious mistake. It is a danger, which threatens our own souls, to which I would that our eyes should be open and on the watch.

And here, by the way, let me say that one great reason why I refer as often as I do to that great topic of the day which in one shape or another is continually shaking the land and marking the age in which we live, is not merely the righting of the wronged, but the instruction, the moral enlightenment, the religious edification of our own hearts, which this momentous topic affords. To me this subject involves infinitely more than a mere question of Humanity. Its political bearing is the very least and most superficial part of it, scarcely worth noticing in comparison with its moral and religious relations. Once, deterred by its outside, political aspect, I shunned it as many do still, but the more it has pressed itself on my attention, the more I have considered it,—the more and more manifest has it become to me that it is a subject full of light and of guidance, of warning and inspiration for the individual soul. It is the most powerful means of grace and salvation appointed in the providence of Heaven, for the present day and generation, more religious than churches and Sabbaths. It is full of sermons. It is a perfect gospel, a whole Bible of mind-enlightening, heart-cleansing, soul-saving truth. How much light has it thrown for me on the page of the New Testament! What a profound significance has it disclosed in the precepts and parables of Jesus Christ! How do his words

burst out with a new meaning! How does it help us to appreciate his trials, and the godlike spirit with which he bore them.

Indeed, I perceive a most impressive and admonishing resemblance between this subject which is moving all minds and growing into such gigantic proportions and the Death of Christ himself. When Jesus had expired on the cross, how little did the Greek and Roman world dream that the crucifixion of an obscure Jew, condemned to death in a remote province of the Empire by the Roman Procurator, had any interest for them, any bearing upon their eternal interests? What matter was it to them that he had died upon the cross? They could not conceive that they had any connection with it, any concern in it whatever. Yet shortly after his death, his friends went abroad in the world publishing that event as the wisdom of God and the power of God to the salvation of the souls of men. The declaration to the polished Greeks seemed utter foolishness. That there was anything of interest in such a fact, the public execution of a miserable Jew,—the idea! it was utterly contemptible, and the men who insisted upon it were regarded as insane fanatics, 'the filth and offscouring of the world.' And yet that fact, how has it dilated and connected itself with the great cause of human salvation all the world over. How little did the world suspect the treasures of wisdom and sanctification and redemption which were at the first hidden in Jesus Christ, hidden indeed. So is it precisely, as the course of events is every year and every day more and more plainly showing,—so is it with the cause of the liberation of the enslaved. It is proving itself to be all-related. It is extending its influence through all classes

and to all interests among us. It is not a mere political matter. It enters and shakes in pieces the mightiest ecclesiastical associations. It summons the teachers of religion to their duty by thousands. It tries the temper and quality of men standing the highest in culture, in position, in office, and as they stand the test, they rise or fall. It pleads with the universal soul of the world, and confuses the councils of the nation and breaks the peace of cities. Like the glorious gospel of the blessed God which took its small beginning in the despised town of Nazareth, and then spread abroad until it overthrew the temples and idols of Pagan worship, and ascended the throne of the Cesars, and went abroad into myriads of hearts, searching, cleansing, and inspiring, so this despised cause of Humanity which aims to break in pieces the rod of the oppressor and the chains of the oppressed, spreads and acts with a like penetrating power, a gospel going forth over all the land, calling out into activity whatever of good or evil lies slumbering in the hearts of men. As in Christ Jesus, so in this cause, are hid treasures of wisdom and sanctification and righteousnes and redemption. So I find it to be. Rich, unspeakably rich is it in the most precious instruction. To every soul that is in earnest in seeking the way of life, it is a light to the feet, a lamp to the paths. Here and now it furnishes us an opportunity of discerning the wide difference there is between knowing the right and doing it, a difference which, as I have said, we are prone to overlook to the peril of our immortal souls.

How is it that in the particular which I have mentioned we strive to impose upon ourselves and upon the world the

knowledge of our duty for the discharge of it? How is it that we think to satisfy ourselves with saying that we know that it is wrong to buy and sell and hunt our fellow men, that we are as much opposed to injustice and inhumanity as any one; and we urge our knowledge on this point as a reason why not a word should be spoken to us in behalf of justice and mercy, as a reason why every voice of appeal and expostulation should be hushed? We not only do nothing ourselves, but we decidedly condemn anybody's doing anything. We would fain have universal inaction. We would have the whole world content with knowing that Slavery is wrong, and with doing nothing. The pre-eminent, the egregious self-delusion in this case is, not merely that we rest satisfied with knowing the right and the wrong of the matter, without any action in conformity with our knowledge, but we actually take credit to ourselves, we boast that we know and hate the wrong, although our knowledge and hatred of it have no power over us to influence us to do what we may. "Don't talk to us, we know, we know all about it. You cannot tell us anything.' "If ye know what is right, happy are ye if ye do it." Happy then, and only then. Before God our knowledge alone will never justify, it will only the more fearfully condemn us.

How now shall this wide distance between our knowledge and our practice be bridged over? What is needed in order that we may do as well as know? It is not more knowledge that is needed. Heaven knows, it has become plain enough to the blindest that the slave power is aiming to make abject slaves of us all. It is throwing off all the disguises under which it was once hid. It is clutching at the whole conti-

nent for the diffusion of its horrors. It has got the whole physical power of the government under which we live under its command. It marches with armed men into our peaceful communities and tears away its prey at the cannon's mouth. It is making the saddest havoc in the hearts of men. It insists upon our doing its base work, and we know how base it is, and yet we do it. We consent that the poor fugitive shall be plunged back again into the hell from which he has escaped. This is what we are all doing, with all our vaunted knowledge of the right and the wrong.

If this state of things continues much longer, we shall lose even what knowledge we have. We shall cease to distinguish at all between good and evil. We shall come to think that it is not such a very bad thing after all, to hunt men and consign them to hopeless misery, that wrong when legalised is really quite a respectable, humane, beneficent, and really Christian institution. To such blindness and perversion some are already doomed. They have lost all perception of the right and the true. When the light that is within us is thus put out, how great, how awful is the darkness!

I cannot bear to think that this is to be our fate, that we are to be given over to a strong delusion to believe a lie, that all the fair promise of this land to which the most sacred hopes of mankind have clung, is all to be quenched in a worse than midnight gloom. I have shared largely in the faith which has so often been expressed upon every new outrage upon the rights of man, the faith that it would result in good, that it would stir up a new spirit of resist-

ance, that it would awaken people to the fearful and downward direction things are taking. I have shared largely in this faith, I say, but when I have heard the very persons who expressed this faith,—when I have heard them say almost in the same breath, 'What is the use of troubling oneself, it can't be helped.' When I have seen, as we have all seen, how one outrage, instead of putting a stop to other outrages, has seemed to prepare the way only for some new and more impious assault upon the dictates of Humanity, the religion of Christ and the law of God, I confess I have had the most painful misgivings, and have felt that it is very possible that we are descending, past all recovery, in the downward way that ends in the utter wreck of civil and religious liberty, and in the establishment of as remorseless a despotism as the world ever saw.

But I cannot entertain this thought long. It is too painful. I must still hope. I hope even now that we are approaching that point in the history of the great Wrong which dishonors and lays waste this glorious land, when to the fierce torrent that threatens to overwhelm us, the decree shall go forth: Hitherto shalt thou go and no farther, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed. And when once stayed they will be driven back forever. As yet, our eyes are not blinded. We see and know how the case stands. The question is still before us. What lack we to become doers of the right as well as knowers? If we know what is right happy are we if we do it.

The one great thing that is needed at the present momentous crisis, needed by all men public and private, is—Courage. We do not stand bravely up for the right that

we know, because we are afraid. There comes in one of our instincts, the instinct of fear, to paralyze the convictions of reason and conscience. We dread the opposition that we must encounter, the loss we must incur, the insecurity in which we must live. We shrink from being ridiculed and denounced and shunned, from being exposed to insult and bloody-minded violence. Appalling as these things may be, even to the stout hearted, still it has come to this: we must flee and yield and compromise our faith in God and the Right, and let Wrong trample us down into the dust, or we must take courage, not the courage that arms itself with weapons of violence, not military courage, but the courage of Christ and his Apostles, the courage of all those noble men, the bravest of the brave, who have served the cause of Humanity and suffered and died for it, exposing themselves unarmed to the utmost injury that human ferocity could inflict. Yes, such men we must have in public stations; such men we must be in our private places, men, who not only know the right, but know also how to confront the extremest danger for the sake of the Right, men of that spirit which I sought to describe last Sunday morning, primitive Christians over again, men ready to bear the reproach of being fanatical, political, anything but religious, willing to be denounced as infidels, atheists, turning the world upside down. Some few men of that temper we have, God be praised, and may He increase the number. May we all, in our private spheres, take heart and be of good courage, come what may, and speak boldly when a word spoken is a brave deed done, and do all that we can. If we can do nothing more, we can do much by strengthening

and encouraging those, who are willing and able to do more, with our cordial concurrence and sympathy. We may not be able to lead; we may not be called upon to take the lead. But we can at least follow, we can choose, and the choice will test our courage, whether we will follow the multitude in doing evil with safety, or the few, who are doing right at their peril.

In doing the right, though the whole world should leave us, though all men should turn against us, we are not, we cannot be alone. The great cloud of witnesses and martyrs, of whom the world was not worthy, encompass us and receive us into their immortal fellowship. All the forces of Nature, animate and inanimate, are on our side. We are in harmony with the light and the air and all the stars of Heaven, and with God, the Maker and Upholder of all. Is there nothing in this sublime faith to inspire courage? Will not this suffice to raise us above all fear?

God sleeps not, though sleeps humanity,
  Moves he still in fire and cloud;
Heaven is not a vast inanity—
  Earth is more than mankind's shroud!
God is in our race, though hidden;
  Peace is mightier far than strife;
Earth may yet be made an Eden—
  Heaven be reached in mortal life!
Boldly speak, reluctant lisper!
  Truth's appeal must mount on high,
Each true word, each feeble whisper
  Once breathed out, can never die!

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